

Children's Trial Against Radiation Exposure Request for Support

What is the Children's Trial Against Radiation Exposure?

Seven years since March 11, 2011, TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant continues to release radioactive materials, and the difficult work of decommissioning has just begun.

"There is profound concern about damage to life, body, and health as a result of continuous exposure to low-dose radiation for a prolonged period of time." As this excerpt from the Sendai Supreme Court ruling recognizes, and as the judiciary admits, children's healthy development is under threat.

We are parents raising children in Fukushima. We are (1) seeking to "Confirm the guarantee of children's right to receive an education in an environment where they do not need to worry about radiation exposure" (Children's Rights Trial) in the municipalities where we reside (Fukushima city, Kawamata town, Date city, Tamura city, Koriyama city, Aizuwakamatsu city, Iwaki city), as well as (2) working with people who evacuated outside the prefecture to make the national government and Fukushima prefecture take responsibility for neglecting measures to prevent children's exposure to radiation after the nuclear disaster, causing them to be unnecessarily exposed to radiation" (Children and Parents' Trial). We filed actions with the Fukushima District Court on August 29, 2014.

Plaintiffs*

*As of March 2018

Children's rights trial 24

Parent-child trial 168

Main Issues in the Children's Trial Against Radiation Exposure

Kenichi Ido, chief attorney

The first issue of this case is whether or not conditions of radiation exposure in Fukushima prefecture constitute a health risk for children. There is still an extensive area in Fukushima prefecture exceeding the national radiation exposure limit for the general public of 1 mSv/year, or where soil contamination levels exceed 40,000 Bq/m² of radioactive cesium, the legally established criteria for designation as a radiation controlled area.*

Additionally, it has become evident that a considerable amount of the radioactive cesium released from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has unexpectedly taken the form of insoluble particles called "cesium balls." Past understandings about internal exposure risks do not apply should they be ingested. The health risks in this case are unknown. It is also internationally recognized that the degree of health damage from low-dose radiation exposure has not been scientifically elucidated. Given that this is the case, we believe that it is the administration's responsibility to at least observe laws established as countermeasures to radiation exposure, and to protect children.

The second issue of this case is the illegality of radiation protection measures taken by the national government and Fukushima prefecture immediately after the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident. The national government and Fukushima prefecture concealed contamination data, including SPEEDI data, and while they distributed potassium iodide tablets to staff at Fukushima Medical University, they did not distribute them to children. They sent professor Shunichi Yamashita and others to repeatedly assert that conditions were safe, and resumed school based on an exposure limit of 20 millisieverts per year, which is 20 times the legal limit.

Most parents did not know much about radiation exposure, and, far from evacuating immediately, they had their children wait with them in line at water supply vehicles as the radioactive plume descended, or told them to play outdoors so as not to inconvenience others at evacuee centers, needlessly exposing them to radiation. There are parents who feel horrible about this. But was it their fault? We believe that unless we clarify the national government and Fukushima prefecture's responsibility for the absence of countermeasures against residents' exposure, another lackluster response will be repeated should a similar accident occur.

**In such areas, eating and drinking is prohibited and protective gear is required to mitigate against internal radiation exposure risks.*

Who is Responsible for Initial Post-Disaster Radiation Exposure?

"Towards the end of March 2011, I was thinking about evacuating as far as possible, and remaining there for a while. This was because as a mother who had done my utmost to raise my precious child mindful of his meals and surroundings, I was not about to let him be hurt by something as terrifying as radiation.

That is why I called a number of municipalities in the Kansai area asking if there were any houses I could move into free of charge. However, every local government refused, saying, "We cannot rent to you unless you were ordered to evacuate." It was the same when I made inquiries at Nara city in May. Regrettably, I was not the only one refused for this reason; in some cases, people were refused even in Shizuoka prefecture and the Tokyo metropolis.¹

However, the national government had revealed on March 19th that it would allow non-mandatory evacuees to use public housing as well.² This fact proves that the notice was not publicized to local governments and citizens across the country. Is this not a clear case of negligence?

Many people desperately tried to escape from radiation during that time. Had all citizens been informed immediately after the accident that all victims regardless of location could live in public housing, immediate post-disaster radiation exposure could have been avoided. From the standpoint that immediately getting away from radiation is the best protective measure, free housing was the most powerful—one could say the only—lifeline that could have made escape possible. I believe that the national government, which did not securely connect victims to that lifeline, is at serious fault."

—From Plaintiff Statement of Opinions during the 14th Oral Argument Hearing

¹Yoshida Chiya, *Report on Mother-Child Evacuation—Nuclear Accident Victims Being Erased*.

²"Environment and Pollution," April 2015 issue.

Statements of Opinion from the Children's Trial Against Radiation Exposure, Volume I

This booklet (in Japanese) is filled with the love of parents who were unable to protect their children from radiation exposure because of the national government and Fukushima prefecture's inaction, and feel regret, indignation, and worry about their children's futures.

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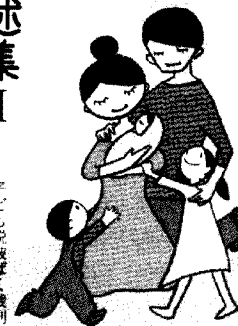
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